



J. TYLER McCAULEY  
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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December 30, 2005

TO: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley   
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – TOUCH A LIFE  
FOUNDATION, TOUCH A LIFE ONE, AND TOUCH A LIFE TWO  
GROUP HOMES**

We have completed a review of Touch a Life One and Touch a Life Two Group Homes (Group Home or Agency) operated by Touch a Life Foundation. The Agency contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Touch a Life One and Touch a Life Two Group Homes are each six-bed facilities, which provide care for boys ages 12-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Touch a Life One Group Home was providing services for three Los Angeles County probation children, and Touch a Life Two Group Home was providing services for five Los Angeles County probation children.

Touch a Life One Group Home is located in the Second District. Touch a Life Two Group Home is located in the First District.

**Scope of Review**

The purpose of the review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues, and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency, and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

### **Summary of Findings**

The Agency is providing the treatment services as outlined in their Program Statement. However, each Group Home needs to address several deficient areas.

Both Group Homes need to landscape the backyards, repair peeling exterior paint; repair or replace the kitchen sinks; replace dirty pillows on children's beds; and include the treatment team in the implementation of the Needs and services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child.

Touch a Life One needs to replace the crawlspace covers, repair the back porch hand rail; repair the large cracks in the kitchen ceiling and walls; replace the cover for the kitchen light; clean the floor in bathroom one; clean bathroom two; repair or replace the furniture, and repair the carpet in bedroom one; replace the light covers in bedrooms two and three; and maintain current and comprehensive NSPs that include long and short-term goals.

Touch a Life Two needs to clean and repaint the kitchen walls and cabinets; remove the stains from the ceiling, repair chairs, repair or replace the mini blinds, and replace sofa covers in the den; repair or replace the patio screen door; clean the shower door in bathroom one; clean the walls and replace the mirror in bathroom two; and repair or replace the window screens in bedroom one.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

### **Review of Report**

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact Mike Pirolo at (626) 293-1110.

JTM:MP:CC:gfw

[http://auditor.co.la.ca.us/group\\_home.asp](http://auditor.co.la.ca.us/group_home.asp)

#### Attachments

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer  
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS  
Paul Higa, Chief Probation Officer  
Ottie Wade, Executive Director, Touch a Life Foundation  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee

**Touch a Life Foundation  
Touch a Life One  
3822 West 59th Place  
Los Angeles, California 90043  
Phone: 323-295-4235  
License Number: 191803623  
Rate Classification Level: 9**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**Method of assessment – Observation**

**Comments:**

Touch a Life One Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is not well maintained. The back yard has debris, and is not adequately landscaped. The paint is peeling off the exterior of the house; the covers are missing from the crawlspaces, and the back porch hand rail is not secure.

There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, in the kitchen, there are large cracks in the ceiling and walls, the sink is worn and damaged, and the cover for the light fixture is missing. The floor is dirty in bathroom one. In bathroom two, the bathtub, shower stall, and shower curtain are dirty.

Children's bedrooms are clean and orderly, and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate lighting, and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate. However, the furniture is worn, there is a broken dresser, and an iron burn mark on the carpet in bedroom one. The covers for the light fixtures in bedrooms two and three are missing. The bed pillows are worn and dirty in bedroom two.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

**Recommendations**

- 1. Touch a Life Foundation management:**
  - a. Landscape the backyard.**
  - b. Repaint the exterior of the house.**

- c. Replace the crawlspace covers.
- d. Repair the handrail.
- e. Repair the cracks in the kitchen walls and ceiling.
- f. Repair or replace the kitchen sink and replace the cover for the light fixture.
- g. Clean the floor in bathroom one.
- h. Clean bathroom two.
- i. Replace the furniture in bedroom one.
- j. Repair the carpet in bedroom one.
- k. Replace the light fixture covers in bedrooms two and three.
- l. Replace the pillows in bedroom two.

## **II. Program Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

### **Comments:**

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are not developed or implemented by the treatment team with input from the child. The NSPs are not current or comprehensive, and do not include long and short-term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

## **Recommendations**

### **2. Touch a Life Foundation management:**

- a. Include the treatment in the development and implementation of the NSPs with input from the child.

**b. Maintain current NSPs for each child**

**c. Create comprehensive NSPs that include short and long term goals.**

### **III. Educational and Emancipation Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

**Comments:**

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs, and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help, and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

#### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

### **IV. Recreation and Activities**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities, and leisure time. Children are given opportunities to participate in planning activities.

Children are allowed to participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

#### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **V. Psychotropic Medication**

### **Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents**

#### **Comments:**

According to the Agency's management, there are currently no children receiving psychotropic medication. This information is appropriately documented.

Children are aware of their right to refuse medication.

#### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **VI. Personal Rights**

### **Method of assessment –Interviews with children**

#### **Sample size for interviews: Two**

#### **Comments:**

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home, and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff, and report that staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to have private visitors, to make and receive personal telephone calls, and to send and receive unopened correspondence and mail. Children are able to attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

#### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **VII. Clothing and Allowance**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

### **Comments:**

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are given opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

Children are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose. However, the Group Home does not provide children with the required weekly minimum base allowance.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items.

Children are encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

### **Recommendation**

- 3. Touch a Life Foundation management provide all children with the required weekly minimum base allowance.**



**Touch a Life Foundation  
Touch a Life Two  
1593 Densmore Street  
Pomona, California 91767  
Phone: 909-620-3709  
License Number: 191500237  
Rate Classification Level: 9**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**Method of assessment – Observation**

**Comments:**

Touch a Life Two Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is not well maintained. The back yard is not landscaped. The paint is peeling off the Group Home exterior and the front porch. The patio screen door is broken.

The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, in the kitchen, the walls and cabinets have chipped and peeling paint, the walls are dirty, and the sink is damaged. In the den, there are stains on the ceiling, the sofa covers are worn and torn, the mini blinds are broken, and the backs and cushions of the desk chairs are torn and not attached to the frames. In bathroom one, the shower door is dirty. In bathroom two the walls are dirty, and the mirror is damaged.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly, and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting, and storage space. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate. However, in bedroom one, the window screens are torn, and the pillows are worn and dirty.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

**Recommendations**

**1. Touch a Life Foundation management:**

**a. Landscape the backyard**

- b. Repaint the exterior of the Group Home and the front porch.**
- c. Repair the patio screen door.**
- d. Clean and repaint the kitchen walls and cabinets**
- e. Repair or replace the kitchen sink.**
- f. Repair the ceiling and desk chairs in the den.**
- g. Replace sofa covers and mini blinds in the den.**
- h. Clean the shower door in bathroom one.**
- i. Clean the walls and replace the mirror in bathroom two.**
- j. Replace the pillows in bedroom one.**
- k. Repair the window screens in bedroom one.**

## **II. Program Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

### **Comments:**

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, comprehensive, and include long and short-term goals. However, the treatment team does not develop or implement the NSPs with input from the child.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services as identified in the NSP.

### **Recommendation**

- 2. Touch a Life Foundation include the treatment team in the development and implementation of the NSPs with input from the child.**

### **III. Educational and Emancipation Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

**Comments:**

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs, and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help, and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

### **IV. Recreation and Activities**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities, and leisure time. Children are given opportunities to participate in planning activities.

Children are allowed to participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **V. Psychotropic Medication**

### **Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents**

#### **Comments:**

According to the Agency's management there are currently no children receiving psychotropic medication. This information is appropriately documented.

Children are aware of their right to refuse medication.

#### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **VI. Personal Rights**

### **Method of assessment –Interviews with children**

#### **Sample size for interviews: Two**

#### **Comments:**

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home, and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff, and report that staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to have private visitors, to make and receive personal telephone calls, and to send and receive unopened correspondence and mail. Children are able to attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

#### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **VII. Clothing and Allowance**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

### **Comments:**

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are given opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

Children are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose. However, the Group Home does not provide children with the required weekly minimum base allowance.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items.

Children are encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

### **Recommendation**

- 3. Touch a Life Foundation provide children with the required weekly minimum base allowance.**

October 26, 2005

Charles Wade  
Ottie Wade  
Administrators  
Touch A Life Foundation  
3481 Mt. Vernon Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90008

Candace Rhue  
Group Home Audit Supervisor  
Department of Auditor-Controller  
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 W. Temple Street  
Room 515-A  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Rhue:

The following is the corrective action plan (CAP) for Touch A Life Foundation based upon Group Home Audit staff monitoring visits to Touch A Life Foundation I in Los Angeles and Touch A Life Foundation II in Pomona.

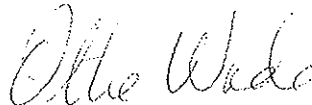
We have made a good faith effort to comply with the Auditor-Controller's recommendations.

Please feel free to contact us at (323) 295-4235 or (909) 626-3709 if you should have any questions.

Sincerely,



Charles Wade  
Administrator



Ottie Wade  
Administrator

OW:dw

**Preface**

*The purpose of this preface is to give the Auditor-Controller a brief synopsis of Touch A Life Foundation's services that is not "measurable" in the usual monitoring site visits terms.*

*Touch A Life Foundation has provided services for over 25 years and is a small, family-oriented group home in Los Angeles and Pomona with only a capacity of six at each site.*

*Recent examples include visits by past residents who have progressed in school, work, and life and shared their experiences and hope with our current residents. In another recent example, minor Luis Meza received a call from his mother that his grandmother was on life support in a Van Nuys hospital. The minor had no approved home pass, so staff (along with her daughter) drove Luis in the evening traffic to the hospital to see his grandmother.*

*Also, the Administrator Ottie Wade along with other staff has sent personal money to past residents who are/were enrolled in college. Several past residents have joined group home staff at family functions, celebrations and Sunday dinners.*

*Touch A Life Foundation staff is committed to having our boys become productive citizens and have extended this commitment beyond placement in its group home.*

**TOUCH A LIFE FOUNDATION**  
**Touch A Life Foundation I**  
**3822 West 59<sup>th</sup> Place**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90043**  
**(323) 295-4235**  
**License No.: 191803623**  
**RCL: 9**

**I. Facility and Environment**

1. Touch A Life Foundation management:

Recommendations/ Action:

a. Landscape the backyard.

- *Will be implemented by November 15th – the gardener will plant seeds, till the soil and remove all weeds.*
- *The gardener will assure the landscape maintenance of the backyard on a weekly basis (every Monday). The Administrators will oversee the gardener's work along with the day Facility Managers.*

b. Repair the peeling paint on the exterior of the house.

- *Will be implemented by November 30th - We are obtaining estimates for painting the exterior of the group home. The Administrators are in the process of securing additional funds.*
- *The Administrators will analyze the bids and determine which will be the best for the group home to use. To ensure quality assurance, the Administrator will inform the maintenance workers to provide feedback on the condition of the exterior of the group home as needed.*

c. Replace the crawlspace covers.

- *Implemented – New crawlspace covers have been placed.*
- *To ensure quality assurance, the Administrators will inform the maintenance employees to provide feedback on the condition of the exterior of the group home as needed.*



d. Repair the handrail

- *Implemented – the handrail has been re-bolted to the cement stairway and on the exterior wall.*
- *To ensure quality assurance, the Administrator will inform the maintenance employees to provide feedback on the condition of the exterior of the group home as needed.*

e. Repair the cracks in the kitchen walls and ceiling

- *Implemented – The cracks were sealed with stucco / joint tape, filled and sanded.*
- *To ensure quality assurance, the Administrator will inform the maintenance workers to provide feedback on the condition of the exterior of the group home as needed.*

f. Replace kitchen sink and cover for the light fixture

- *Implemented – A cover was placed over the light fixture; A new stainless steel sink was purchased and installed by a general contractor.*
- *The Administrators along with the dayshift Facility Managers will oversee the maintenance worker and will monitor any physical upkeeps of the group home.*

g. Clean the floor and replace the burned out light bulb in the bathroom one.

- *Implemented –The bathroom floor was cleaned and the light bulb was replaced.*
- *The day and afternoon facility managers are responsible for supervising and/or cleaning the group home and replacing burned out light bulbs..*
- *The Administers will assure that the group home is clean and in repair through verbal contact with staff and on-site inspections.*

h. Clean the bathtub, shower stall, and shower curtain in bathroom two.

- *Implemented – The bathtub and shower stall was cleaned and shower curtain replaced.*
- *All grave yard Facility Managers supervise the residents' chores including bathroom cleaning and are responsible for cleaning-up behind the residents if the chore is not done properly. The Administrators conduct regular inspections and will supervise or clean the group home themselves if needed.*

i. Replace the furniture in bedroom one

- *Implemented by November 15th– New furniture and pre-owned furniture will be placed in bedroom one*
- *The grave yard and day Facility Managers inspect the residents' furniture on a regular basis and report damage/graffiti to the Administrators. The Administrators also inspect the group home during regular onsite visits.*

j. Repair carpet in bedroom one

- *Implemented – A new piece of carpet was placed in the same area of the burned mark and the carpet was tightened throughout the house.*
- *The day Facility Managers oversaw the professional carpet installer and the Administrator will monitor the wear-and-tear and any damage done to the carpet.*

k. Replace the light fixture covers in bedroom two and three.

- *Implement – New light fixtures were purchased and replaced by the maintenance worker*
- *The Administrators will assure that the group home is clean and in repair through verbal contact with staff and on-site inspections.*

l. Replace the pillows in bedroom two.

- *Implemented – The Administrator purchased new pillows for most of the bedrooms.*
- *The Administrators will assure that the group home is clean and in repair through verbal contact with staff and on-site inspections.*

## **II. Program Services**

1. Touch A Life Foundation management:

a. Provide a treatment plan to develop and implement the Needs and Service Plans (NSPs) with input from the child.

- *Implemented – The child is always included in the NSPs. The MSW may have forgotten to have the resident sign the form. The MSW had all residents sign their NSP.*
- *The Administrators will continue to oversee the MSW's treatment plan for each client.*

- b. Provide NSPs that are comprehensive and includes short and long term goals
  - *Implemented – The MSW will continue to include short and long term goals in the NSPs*
  - *The Administrators will continue to oversee the MSW's work for each client.*
- c. Provide and maintain a current NSP for each child
  - *Implemented –All children's NSPs are current.*
  - *The Administrators will continue to oversee the MSW's work for each client.*

#### VII. Clothing and Allowance

- 3. Touch A Life Foundation management to provide all children with the required minimum base allowance.
  - *Implemented – The base allowance is provided for all children.*
  - *The Administrator will adhere to the contract requirements.*

**TOUCH A LIFE FOUNDATION**  
**Touch A Life Foundation II**  
**1593 Densmore Street**  
**Pomona, CA 91767**  
**(909) 626-3709**  
**License Number: 191500237**  
**RCL: 9**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**Recommendations/ Action:**

- a. Landscape the backyard
  - *Will be implemented by November 15th –The gardener or facility manager will plant seeds, turn the dirt and remove all weeds.*
  - *The gardener will assure the landscape maintenance of the backyard on a weekly basis. The Administrators will oversee the gardener's work along with the daily Facility Managers.*
- b. Repair the paint on the exterior of the group home and the front porch.
  - *Will be implemented by November 30th - We are obtaining estimates for painting the exterior of the group home. The Administrators are in the process of securing additional funds.*
  - *The Administrators will analyze the bids and determine which will be the best for the group home to use. To ensure quality assurance, the Administrator will inform the maintenance workers to provide feedback on the condition of the exterior of the group home as needed.*
- c. Repair the patio screen door.
  - *Will be implemented by November 15th – The Facility Manager and maintenance helpers have put new rollers (wheels) and put the screen back on its track.*
  - *The Administrator will assess the patio screen door and if it does not stay secure will replace it.*

d. Repair the kitchen walls, cabinets and sink.

- *Implemented - All repairs completed, and the kitchen re-painted. A stainless steel sink was purchased and will be installed by November 15<sup>th</sup>.*
- *The maintenance worker will complete the work with the day and evening Facility Managers and Administrators overseeing completion.*

e. Clean the kitchen walls.

- *Implemented – The walls were cleaned and re-painted.*
- *The maintenance worker will complete the work with the day and evening Facility Managers and Administrators overseeing completion.*

f. Repair the ceiling and desk chairs in the den.

- *Implemented – The ceiling spot was repainted and the desk chairs screws tightened.*
- *The maintenance worker will complete the work with the day and evening Facility Managers and Administrators overseeing completion.*

g. Replace couch covers and mini blinds in the den.

- *Implemented - Couch covers were replaced and the wands were replaced on the blinds and one mini blind purchased*
- *The day/evening Facility Managers and Administrators will oversee wear-and-tear of the group home and will repair on an as-needed-basis.*

h. Clean the shower door in bathroom one.

- *Implemented – The Facility Manager cleaned the shower door several times with bleach and soap scum remover.*
- *The day/evening Facility Managers and Administrators will oversee wear-and-tear of the group home and will repair on an as-needed-basis.*

i. Clean the walls and replace the mirror in bathroom two.

- *Implemented – The mirror was replaced by the maintenance worker.*
- *The day/evening Facility Managers and Administrators will oversee wear-and-tear of the group home and will repair on an as-needed-basis.*

j. Replace the pillows in bedroom one.

- *Implemented – The Administrator purchased new pillows for most of the bedrooms.*
- *The Administrators will assure that the group home is clean and in repair through verbal contact with staff and on-site inspections.*

k. Repair the window screens in bedroom one.

- *Will be implemented by November 15<sup>th</sup> – The screens will be repaired, replaced or rescreened by the maintenance worker.*
- *The day/evening Facility Managers and Administrators will oversee wear-and-tear of the group home and will repair on an as-needed-basis.*

## II Program Services

2. Touch A Life Foundation provide a treatment team to develop and implement the NSPs with input from the child.

- *Implemented – The child is always included in the NSPs. The MSW may have forgotten to have the resident sign the form. The MSW had all residents sign their NSP.*
- *The Administrators will continue to oversee the MSW's treatment plan for each client*

## VII. Clothing and Allowance

3. Touch A Life Foundation management to provide all children with the required minimum base allowance.

- *Implemented – The base allowance is provided for all children.*
- 
- *The Administrator will adhere to the contract requirements.*